

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

II. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 3-11 are pending; claims 3 and 7 are amended; and claims 1-2 have been cancelled. Claims 3 and 7 are the independent claims. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added herewith.

III. SUMMARY OF THE OFFICE ACTION

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 7-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite; claims 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawasaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,882,048); and claims 4, 6, 8, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawasaki in view of Crisp (US Patent No. 464,338).

IV. ARGUMENTS

A. The rejection of claims 7-11 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph:

Claims 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. In response, Claim 7 is amended to overcome the indefiniteness rejection under 112, second paragraph. In particular, the phrase “leading from the circumferential groove” which the

Examiner alleged as unclear has been deleted. Furthermore, the antecedent basis problem with "said first and second sealing members" has been corrected in the amendment. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 7 and its dependent claims are now clear and definite. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

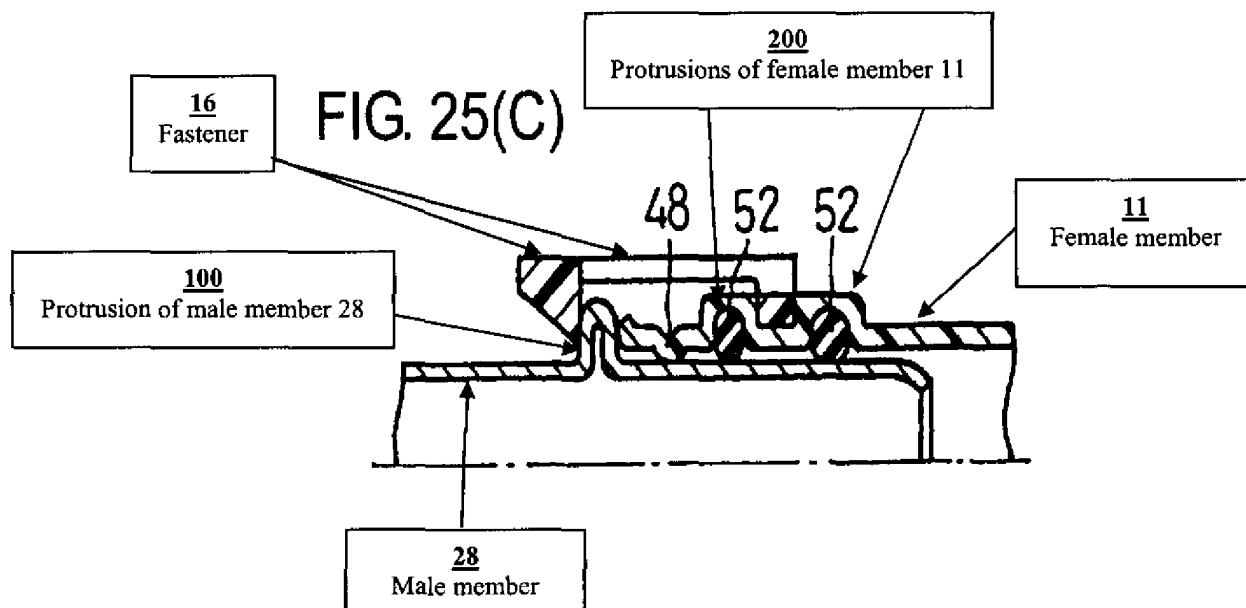
B. The rejection of claims 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawasaki:

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawasaki. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 3 and 7, as amended, recite a quick connecting device comprising: a female member having first and second circumferential protrusions; a male member having a circumferential groove; first and second sealing members; and a fastening member disposed around the female and male members so as to be in contact with the first circumferential protrusion of the female member and received in the groove of the male member.

Kawasaki does not disclose, teach, suggest, or render obvious the elements recited in claim 3 or 7. In particular, Kawasaki does not disclose, teach, or suggest a male member having a circumferential groove for receiving a fastening member. As admitted by the Examiner, the male member in Fig. 25C of Kawasaki does not have a circumferential groove (see Office Action, page 4, lines 7-8 and page 6, lines 7-8). Rather, it has a protrusion. For clarity, Fig. 25C of Kawasaki is reproduced below in which the male member (28), female member (11), and fastening member (16) are numbered according to Figs. 1(C) and 2; the protrusion of male

member 28 is herein assigned as “100” and the protrusions of female member 11 are herein assigned as “200”. As mentioned above, Fig. 25(C) of Kawasaki shows a protrusion 100 instead of a groove, as recited in claims 3 and 7. A protrusion is actually the opposite of a groove. One skilled in the art would interpret a protrusion as an element that rises above a surface while a groove as a long, narrow opening or channel in a surface. Therefore, a protrusion, such as the protrusion 100 in Fig. 25(C) of Kawasaki cannot be a groove.



The rejection in the Office Action states that it is well known in the art, and thus would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art, to add another protrusion to the left of the existing protrusion 100 of Kawasaki on the male member thereof to form a groove against which the fastener 16 can rest. The Office Action further states that such a modification would have been obvious because “optimization of proportions in a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill in the art.” See page 7, lines 4-5 of the Office Action. It is respectfully

submitted that it would not be common sense and would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to add another protrusion to the left of the existing protrusion 100 on the male member 28 in Fig. 25C of Kawasaki to form a groove for a fastening member to rest. The fastener 16 in Fig. 25C is already in its optimal position because it rests tightly between the protrusion 100 of the male member 28 and the groove of the female member 11 (in the reproduced Fig. 25C above, the groove is the space between the two protrusions 200). Because the protrusion 100 of the male member 28 and the groove on the female member in Fig 25C already hold the fastener 16 in place, adding another protrusion to the left of the existing protrusion 100 on the male member 28 would be superfluous and thus not obvious to a person skilled in the art.

The rejection refers to the protrusion 48 in Fig. 26 of Kawasaki as an example of forming a groove with the existing protrusion 100 on the male member 28. The protrusion 48 in Fig. 26, however, does not form a groove with the existing protrusion 100 on the male member 28. Rather, the protrusion 48 of Kawasaki functions to maintain the connection between the male member 28 and the female member 11 to prevent backlash of liquid that goes through the male and female members (see col. 22, lines 8-12). Moreover, the protrusion 48 is too far away from the existing protrusion 100 on the male member to form a groove.

Claim 7 further recites that the male member has an inclined surface wherein the first sealing member is located on said inclined surface. In Kawasaki, the first sealing member (52) is not located on an inclined surface of the male member, as recited in claim 7. As shown in Fig. 25C of Kawasaki, the first sealing member 52 is located on a flat surface of the male member.

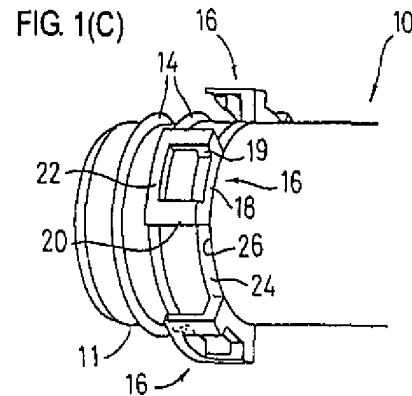
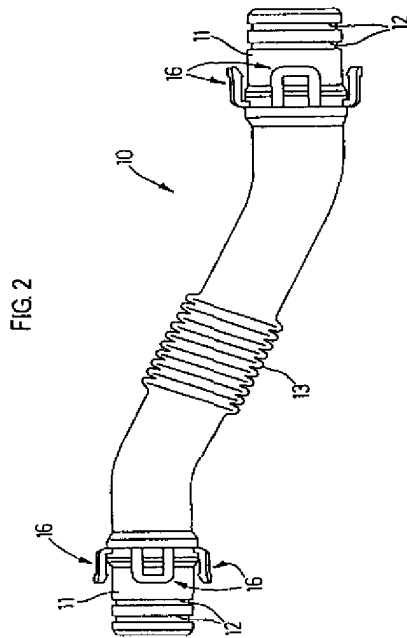
Accordingly, a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established. Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Dependent claims 4-6 and 8-11 are also allowed over Kawasaki. Moreover, these claims recite additional features not found in Kawasaki.

C. The rejection of claims 4, 6, 8, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawasaki in view of Crisp:

Claims 4, 6, 8, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawasaki in view of Crisp. For the reasons discussed above, dependent claims 4, 6, 8, and 10 are allowable over Kawasaki. And Crisp fails to cure the deficiencies of Kawasaki. Moreover, there is no reason to substitute the fastener in Crisp for the fastener 16 in Kawasaki.

In the rejection, the Examiner states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have fabricated the fastening member 16 of Kawasaki as a fastening clip taught by Crisp because Crisp's fastening clip is "a simple and durable device capable of being expeditiously and conveniently applied to bind the male and female parts together" (see Office Action, page 8, third paragraph). Such a motivation to combine Kawasaki and Crisp is respectfully traversed because Kawasaki's fastening member 16 is already a simple, durable device, ready and capable of being expeditiously and conveniently applied to connect the male and female members together. As shown in Fig. 1(C) and Fig. 2 of Kawasaki, reproduced below, fastening member 16 has one end integrally fixed into the female member 11 (see col. 11, lines 21-22) and the other end has a hook that is ready to snap onto an edge of the protrusion 100 of the male member 28 with one move by a user, hence the simplicity and convenience. Furthermore, the fastening member A, B shown in Fig. 2 of Crisp clamps on the flat surface of

the male and female members; thus, it may move because it is not secured to a groove or a protrusion. On the other hand, in Kawasaki, the fastening member 16 does not move because one of its ends is integrally fixed to the female member 11 and the other end is snapped and hooked onto the edge of the protrusion 100 of the male member 28. Therefore, it appears that the fastening member 16 of Kawasaki is more secured and convenient the fastening member A, B of Crisp. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have a reason to utilize the fastening member taught by Crisp for that in Kawasaki.



IV. CONCLUSION

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to BLANK ROME LLP, Deposit Account No. 23-2185 (001058-00021). In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith and in the event that a separate petition does not accompany this response, Applicants hereby petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely. Any fee due is authorized above.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 12, 2008

By: Tara L. Laster
Tara L. Laster
Reg. No. 46,510

BLANK ROME LLP
Watergate
600 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037
Telephone: (202) 772-5800
Fax: (202) 572-1400